**TITANS RACE AT STATE.**

It was dark and misty when the Titans boarded the bus for the last meet of the 2017 season: the IHSA State Finals.  For the second year in a row we would be taking both our boys and girls full teams.

We set up our tent, the girls got their bibs, and started their warmups.  The course was wet and soft, but there was no wind and the temp was ideal in the low 50s.  We did our strideouts, and just like that it was 9:00am and the gun was going off and 200 of Illinois' fastest girls were racing down the wide starting wedge at legendary Detweiller Park.

Cate Atkins got out in 6:17, 102nd place at the mile mark.  Then she started to move, picking up 43 places to move into 59th b the 2-mile mark at 12:37.  From there she kept cruising, picking up 18 more girls to finish 41st in 18:43, just a second off her lifetime PR!

Sophi Allen was our #2, getting out in 100th place in 6:16.  She moved up 21 places in mile two, crossing in 12:51 in 79th place.  She closed in a 6:39, picking up one more girl and finishing in a lifetime PR of 19:30.

Julia Reid strung together her third season PR in a row, running her fastest at Regional, Sectional, and State!  She too ran great splits, getting out in 6:32, picking up 23 places in mile two to cross in 13:27 and closing in a 6:56 for a 20:23.

Molly Holt had another lifetime PR, running 21:20!  Tori Witzig joined her one place behind in that exact same time.  Hannah Ludy also ran in the 21:20s, running a 21:26, a mere six seconds off her lifetime PR.  Allison Kelly finished out our State race in 21:50.

Our team average was 20:15, two seconds faster than it was at Elmwood last week.  We placed 18th as a team.  It was a good year.

The guys followed close behind at 10am.  Noah Smith led the charge, running another sub-16 15:55 for 48th place.  He moved up seven places as the race went on.

Bo Halvorsen was our #2, running 16:05.

Mason Ringger repeated as our #3, moving up a team best 60 places from the mile mark to the finish; he also ran 16:42, a lifetime PR.

Matt Ingalsbe was our #4, running 16:49 and moving up 37 places from the 1 to the finish.

Nathan DeMarb was our #5, moving up 21 places and running 17:04.

Will Bushert ran 17:27 as our #6 and Sebastian Meyer chased Will in the chute with his lifetime PR of 17:32.

Our team average was 16:31, faster than 2014, when we also placed 13th.

From there we went over and watched the awards ceremony.

Then we cheered Sean Supan as his U-High Pioneers' team placed #2 in 2A.

At the end of the day we had four lifetime PRs and three season PRs.

And all fourteen Titans who raced today will be back tomorrow.

An interesting statistic I read on twitter about the 3A State Champions Downers Grove North (and confirmed via a brief exploration of [athletic.net](http://athletic.net/)), their boys times today (all seniors except Roberts, a junior):

Ridderhoff, 14:36

Chudzik, 14:44

Christensen, 14:46

Roberts, 14:47

McCool, 14:53

Birkmeier, 15:14

Lockerby, 16:10

Those same boys as freshmen:

Ridderhoff, 17:19

Chudzik, 16:56

Christensen, 20:06

Roberts, 17:12

McCool, 18:37

Birkmeier, 17:57

Lockerby, 19:25.

I went to a coach's clinic where I had the opportunity to hear the former DGN coach speak.  He is fantastically inspirational.  I wanted to run for him.  But the three takeaways I have in my notes from his presentation are this:

1. Love your (XC) kids like your (biological) kids.  Raise them how you would raise your own.

2. Keep everything positive.

3. Set the bar high, hold the kids accountable.

The new coach, John Sipple, gave a great interview I read before the season started.  You can read it here <http://highschoolharrier.com/post/163930112723/coach-john-sipple-of-nxn-qualifying-team-downers>

We will have our End-of-the-Year Banquet this Saturday at 9am.  The football game will either be at GCMS or home, so you should have plenty of time to get to the game after the banquet.  It is a breakfast potluck, so bring a breakfast food.  We will eat and hand out awards and then I will head out to the course to set up for the Furrow Euro which is on Nov. 18.  We are up to 34 registered runners, so if you know of anyone else who wants to sign up, have them do that soon, price goes up by $10 on race day.  I think we will be using proceeds from this years' race towards a cross country record board similar to the new Track and Field Record board that was hung on Thursday (and looks awesome!).

The kids raced tough these last three weeks.  They may want a couple days off, but when they start running again, it might be a good idea not to have any hard workouts for about two weeks.

I'm proud of far they've come this fall, I'm excited to see how much more we can improve from here.

**BACK TO BACK TO STATE!**
We spent a week preparing specifically for this race.  Awkward "motivational" speeches, cold runs, warm runs, windy runs, and in all honesty, another week in unpredictable Illinois weather.  We knew from Regional results that our boys had a good chance of placing fifth, but we would have to hold off Tremont as well as a Eureka that would be returning their top runner, Kyle Johnson for the Sectional.  On the girls' side, we placed fifth at Regional, and only five teams advance out of a Sectional, so we could place no lower than we did at regional even though all seven girls had a PR and we were adding 15 additional teams.  Factor in the addition of last year’s third place team Liberty, Mendon Unity, Williamsville, Macomb, and Elmwood-Brimfield and things seemed unlikely, but not impossible.
As we trickled in to the Centennial lot while it was still dark, it was clear that the sun would not be joining us today and a little rain (or perhaps sleet) fell as we gathered at the link.  We doubled our warmup to combat the 37-degree temps, but if there was any relief it was that the forecast wind of 15mph must have been hanging out with the sun, because it did not show up either.  Only its 5mph little sibling showed up, and wouldn't be a big factor in the race.  We finished our warmups and loaded the bus for the 75 minute trip to Maple Lane Golf Club for one of the toughest Sectionals in Class A.
Given the cold and the fact that our tent is still decommissioned after a wind-related accident in the spring, most athletes stayed in the warmth of the bus as I got the packets and began to work the karma by wishing other teams good luck and hand out the bibs to our runners.  9:00am came quickly and the girls took off for their warmup.  I went to the 9:15 coaches meeting where they explained that the high school was under construction and that awards were going to be at the course- not a big deal since Elmwood hosts a great meet and results are usually very efficient... usually.  All through the coaches meeting the tension was building and the adrenaline was starting to flow.  We were dismissed at 9:30 and I jogged over to Box 7 to check on our girls and start the strideouts and final warmups.
The girls looked calm and prepared.  They never mentioned the cold or the other teams, they seemed wholly focused on themselves and each other.  We switched into our spikes and returned to the box for the start.  As the gun went off, our girls got enveloped in the crowd, but their faces were still relaxed and focused.  As they came around the 800-meter mark, Sophi was our #1, looking faster than ever and right around 3:00.  Cate was a good 10-seconds back, but with her trademark smirk as if she knows exactly how many of the girls in front of her will be coming back in miles two and three.  Julia rounded the corner next and either gave me a three-finger peace sign, or was confirming that she had three matches left to burn and she was still in control.  Tori and Allison were right on her heels and looking great working together.  Our 6-7 tandem of Molly and Hannah also came through together and looking strong.  Our team place at the 800 wasn't great, but our poise looked fantastic.  I raced over to the mile mark to check on the girls as they crested the hill and let them know there was plenty of race left.  As they came up Sophi led the way with her 6:10 followed by Cate at 6:20.  Julia came by at 6:37 and Allison and Tori right behind at 6:43.  Even Hannah and Molly broke 7:00 for their first mile, crossing at 6:54.  It was the first time all season we had our top seven through in 7min or less- we were running awesome, but would it last.
I dashed back to just past the 2-mile mark, a spot where I was alone save the Elmwood course monitor.  Cate had moved into our #1 spot, and had also passed about thirty girls and was in the top twenty.  Sophi Allen was holding on to the race of her life, crossing the two in 12:56, although it appeared as though a side stitch was trying to hitchhike on Sophi that third mile.  Julia still had two matches as she cruised down to the pond, a hint of a smile and a peace sign as she cruised through two in 13:36.  Allison and Tori were holding strong, 14:05 as they crossed two and moving up on Tremont's #3.  Hannah and Molly were still shoulder to shoulder at 14:24 at the two and moving up.  Both girls were ahead of Tremont's #5, which could prove useful it is came down to a couple of points in team scores.  I sprinted to the finish line and started screaming.  I know it is silly and probably doesn't help much, but the girls were having the team race of their lives and I was pretty excited about how great they were doing.  They all turned the corner and sprinted in to the finish.  Cate came through in 19:03- 18 seconds faster than the same meet in 2016!  Sophi blitzed a 19:44, 59-seconds faster than 2016!  Julia ran a 20:31, a season PR by 8-seconds!  Tori ran 21:07, a 22-second lifetime PR!  Allison ran 21:08, a season PR by 35 seconds!  Hannah ran 21:25, 1:26 faster than her 2016 Sectional time, a season PR by 35 seconds and only 5 seconds off her lifetime PR of 21:20.  Molly Holt finished in 21:26, a 35-second lifetime PR!  From 1-7, the girls brought it.  Regardless of how team scores played out, we did what we came to do- we raced our butts off and left it all on the course.  After a few hugs and high fives, the celebration was put on hold as the boys were heading to Box 6 for their race.
The boys looked ready.  Three juniors, three freshmen, and Matt the sophomore.  We had some sniffles and sickness to overcome this week, but we knew what boys to look for when the race started.  After the three-part vignette of motivational speeches, the boys got into the box for the big show.  I was still pretty stoked about how well the girls ran, but quickly I shifted into playing out scenarios for the boys’ race.  What if Kyle Johnson came back for Eureka stronger than ever?  What if the sickness we dealt with this week left us drained?  What if Tremont brought the legs they had at Amboy?  What if?  I didn't get long to ponder those "what ifs" as the gun went off and the boys race began.  Right from the start, Eureka's top three of Johnson-Cook-Danner were leading the whole race.  Sumer of Tremont was near the front as well.  As the boys came around the little loop to the 800-mark, Bo and Noah looked tough up front, and were working together.  It was a long gap back to Nate and Matt, and even farther until Mason came through.  I didn't even see Sebastian and Will in the melee.  I ran over to the top of the mile and tried to sort out the first five minutes... Eureka got out great, were they too good?  Tremont had four in front of our three, will they hold?  Where was their five?  Was that all five Olympia guys with our 5?  Olympia?!
As they came up at the mile mark, Noah had separated ever so slightly from Bo, but both looked strong at 5:01 and 5:03.  Nate and Matt ran a smart first mile, 5:27, and right at their time from the Elmwood invite, the question would be if they could move up in mile two.  Mason was six seconds behind Matt and Nathan, crossing at 5:33 with Will at his side.  Sebastian crossed at 5:52, making it all seven under 6.  Tremont's five had faded in the second half of mile one, and Eureka's top three had broken apart and only Johnson remained at the front as Cook and Danner were giving up places.  It looked like we were going to be able to hold off our conference foes, but Olympia still had five guys in front of our three!  They were running out of our minds, we had some catching up to do.  I jogged over to the place right after the two mile mark and waited.
It wasn't long before Noah and Bo came around the corner, Noah at the two in 10:31 and Bo at 10:34.  We had a tough 1-2 tandem up front, both guys in the top twenty, but both Eureka and Tremont had their #1s ahead of ours.  The big surprise was those neon headbands of the Olympia Spartans.  Their #1 was only ten seconds behind Bo and their 2-3-4 were all ahead of our #3.  In addition, their #5 was right with our #5 with less than a mile to go.  We would need some separation and a great finish to hold off the Spartans.  At the two-mile mark Nathan and Matt arrived at 11:18, and Mason was right behind at 11:21, with Will coming on strong at 11:32.  Sebastian crossed in 12:11.  200 meters later, Mason was shoulder to shoulder with Nathan and Matt was only two steps back as we had formed the mini-pack and set off chasing the Olympia #4.  All three worked together to chase down as many guys as they could that last half mile.  Finding a second wind, Will came back after a 5:59 second-mile to close in a 5:37, picking up valuable places and even getting ahead of Olympia's #5.  Sebastian closed with a sub-6 for 18:08.
As they turned and raced down the finish, Noah led the way with a 15:55, down from a 17:05 that he raced at the Elmwood Sectional in 2016.  Bo ran a 16:03, down from 17:03 in 2016.  Both were in the top 20.  Mason continued to move up and finished as our #3 in 16:48, an 11-second PR from his Regional-converted time.  Matt Ingalsbe came back in a big way, finishing as our #4 in 16:54, 1:06 faster than his 2016 Sectional race.  Nathan DeMarb completed our scoring effort, also breaking 17 with his 16:56, a lifetime PR.  Will Bushert was our #6 in 17:09, beating his 2016 Sectional-saving time of 17:31 by 22-seconds, and putting crucial points on other teams' 4-5 runners.  Our boys looked strong, but Olympia came out of nowhere and still had four in front of our three, we would have to wait until final results to see if it would be us or Olympia for that final spot.
As we tried to process everyone's races and sort out team places using our memories and photos, we gathered up the kids and went for our traditional post-sectional cooldown.  It is a chance for me to remind the athletes that one race does not define a runner.  That we gave our best, and we would have to let the team scores settle where they may.  It was a bit of an emotional moment as so much of what were worked for was out of our hands and that our best might not be good enough, even though it was our best.  For those not in attendance today, you missed a good one.  The kids poured their hearts into that race.  They deserved a ticket to State, but alas we would have to wait for the math to find out if we had indeed earned it.
As we headed over towards awards, which were held outside this year because of the aforementioned construction, there seemed to be a hold up.  Noon rolled by on our watches, which is when awards usually start, but it was clear nothing was doing.  At 12:15, they announced that awards should be ready at 12:30, but at 12:30... nothing.  Soon (actually thirty minutes later), 1:00pm rolled by with no awards.  We were cold.  We were anxious.  We really had no idea if we placed 5th or 8th on both the boys and girls side.  On the boys side we were pretty sure we got Tremont and Eureka, but Olympia was going to be close, pending their #5.  On the girls it was wide open.  Tremont looked good, but their jerseys were similar to Unity's so perhaps were missed someone, or perhaps Unity was better than we thought.  Springfield Lutheran looked great through 4, but we didn't see their #5.  Elmwood was ranked ahead of us, as was St. Teresa, and we had no idea where their girls finished up.  FINALLY, as the clock neared 2:00pm, they announced the girls, starting with the top ten individuals.  Only one of the top ten was sure to be on a qualifying team, so either Cate would make it on a team or not at all.  It was a tough year to get out as an individual.  As they announced the top ten teams, slowly our competitors’ names were called.
In a tie for 10th, Liberty and St. Teresa.
OK, only Lutheran, Tremont, Elmwood and us for that 5th place spot...
In 9th place... Elmwood with 240points.
Down to Tremont, Lutheran, and us for the 5th spot...
In 8th place... Tremont with 207.
Just us and Lutheran...
In 7th place... Springfield Lutheran with 205.
Wait, what?
In 6th place... EPG with 203.
Our world collapsed.  What had happened?  We ran our butts off.  We caught the girls we had to catch.  They announced Tremont and Lutheran behind us.  It was supposed to be our spot.  We did all we could and beat the ...
In 5th place.... Olympia with 190
Wait?  Olympia in 5th?  Who beat them that wasn't supposed to?
In 4th place Eureka with 150.
Who did I miss?  Whose girls ran the race of their life?
In 3rd place... PORTA with 123.  Nope.  That can't be right.  Coaches began to speak up.  Results were stopped.  Coach Meyers took the results back in to the officials.  It was a weird moment to be sure.  But if that weirdness meant we still had a chance...
While he was gone, they announced that Monticello had placed second with 122 and Williamsville won with 98.
Coach Meyers came back, explained that PORTA had 423 points instead of 123 and it was simply misread.  That meant that we had actually placed 5th, edging Lutheran by three points and Tremont by five!  We were going to State!  I hesitated to celebrate too much as results were a bit wonky and I feared the worst, but the worst never came.  We got our bus pass to State and celebrated year number two in a row for the girls.
While waiting for the boys I walked over and talked to my old coaches at Olympia about their race.  Their entire top five is freshmen and sophomores and two of their guys had 30+-second PRs today.  The Spartans looked good.  Just then they brought out the boys results.  As they started announcing the top ten teams, our conference rivals of Eureka and Tremont were eliminated by placing 8th and 7th.  As they announced the 6th place team "Olympia with 161 points" I was pretty sure we had done it.  In 5th place, EPG with 142.  We had done it.  Both teams back to State two years in a row.  Not ones to make it easy, we took the last qualifying team spot all four times.  An exciting way to do it, for sure, but perhaps next year we could do it the easy way.
 **REGIONAL RECAP**
On Friday we took our non-regional roster to Detweiller Park for an End of the Year Time Trial.  The idea was to give those runners a chance to earn a PR in fair weather conditions on a fair course.  That being said, it would be difficult to harness the adrenaline of a race in a lonely time trial setting.
Sebastian Meyer led the way, running a breakaway 17:53, only one second off his SJO PR.  Will Yergler set a new lifetime PR in his last race in high school, running 22:38 for three miles.  But the highlight of the boys’ times was Mitchell Uphoff, who dropped a 23:28 to set a season PR by 63 seconds!  Of the four girls who ran, three of them managed to beat their times from Eureka the week before, and Mya Gramm ran to a lifetime PR of 23:11.  It was a good morning.
The next day, we headed over to Eureka for the IHSA Regional and the beginning of the State Series.  Seven teams advance out of Regionals, and our assigned regional was one of the toughest in the State.  We would have to put together a pretty good day to place well.  The ladies put together about the best day you could possibly hope for.  Leading the way was Cate Atkins.  She was fast and relaxed and cruised to a season PR of 18:51 (19:10) and 7th place finish.  Sophi Allen set a lifetime PR of 19:22 (19:41) and placed 13th.  Julia Reid threw up a little near the hill, but still managed to run a season PR of 20:18 (20:38), finished 27th place and narrowed in on her Regional time from 2016!  Tori Witzig continues to surge forward as she gains confidence at the 3-mile distance, dropping a 21:02 (21:23) for a 32-second PR!  Allison Kelly was right with Tori and also logged a season PR with her 21:22 (21:43), placing 46th.  Our #6 and #7 worked together or near each other for most of the race as Hannah Ludy and Molly Holt chased each other into the chute at 21:38 (22:00) and 21:39 (22:01), respectively- a season PR for Hannah by 56 seconds, and a lifetime PR for Molly by 24 seconds!  Our top five averaged a 20:11, our fastest average of the season by twenty seconds per runner, and our second-fastest regional average of all time (behind Farmington's 2.85 course).  Our score of 131 was only one point behind a very talented Tremont team, who we will be racing against for the final spot to State this Saturday.  For those keeping score- ALL seven of our girls had season or lifetime PRs at Regional- nice job, ladies.
On the guys side, we talked about saving a little for Sectionals at our pre-race huddle.  Boah got out together and stuck together for the entire race.  Cruising to 15:54 (16:10) and 15:55 (16:11), respectively, our #2 and #3 times for the Eureka course, only Hunter Cobbley was able to post a better time (15:41) in the history of our program.  Running #3 was Mason Ringger, finally breaking 17:00 with his 16:42 (16:59), good enough for 25th place.  Nathan DeMarb was our #4 with his 16:57 (17:14), placing 35th.  Will Bushert stepped up as our #5, running 17:12 (17:29).  Matt Ingalsbe had sore quads and hips, but still managed a 17:31 (17:48) for 51st, and Zac Nelson rounded out our varsity squad with his 18:05 (18:23).  Our top five averaged a 16:32, our second-fastest Regional average of all time, and we placed 3rd, but only one point ahead of a very talented Tremont team who probably still stings from missing State by one team place the last two years.  We will have to place higher and run faster next week to earn our place back at Detweiller.
 **EPGXC = HOI CONFERENCE RUNNER-UP**Conditions were not ideal at Lower Lake Park in Eureka as the Titans laced up the spikes for the Heart of Illinois Conference Meet.  The grass was long and shaggy, the rain had soaked and softened the mole-filled course, the trails were slick and walnut-laden, and there was a steady breeze coming off the lake on an otherwise humid morning.  For many it would be their last meet of the season, the one basket we had put our eggs in, the one we tapered for, and unfortunately it would be very difficult to earn a PR against those odds.

In the girls’ race, three girls managed to do just that.  Cate Atkins led the way and earned a season PR 19:35, en route to a third place All-Conference finish.  Hannah Ludy continues to look stronger every week, as she set another season PR with her 22:34.  But Haley Uphoff was the only one to set a lifetime PR, which she did by over a minute, dropping to 27:08 on the 2.95 course.  With only three PRs it would be easy to dismiss the race as underwhelming, but relative to the other teams we had a great race.  Joining Cate as All-Conference was Sophi Allen, placing 9th in 20:25, right behind the talented Mikayla Moore of DeeMack who has gone under 19:30 this year.  Julia Reid finished in the medals with her 21:01, earning 12th place.  Tori Witzig had a strong race, running a 21:36, earning a medal with her 15th place.  Allison Kelly was our #5 and took home the final medal of the meet with her 20th place 21:48.  A surprise #6 was Hannah Ludy with her aforementioned PR, and Molly Holt rounded out our top seven, crossing on Hannah's heels in 22:37.  Mya Gramm ran a fantastic race, what would have surely been a PR in any other conditions, our #8 with her 22:56.  Megan Endress was our #9 and Carmen SantAmour was our #10 with their 23:21 and 23:28.  Sarah Schug ran 23:36; Amelia Miller fought through knee pain for a 25:10; and Lauren Buggar finished in 31:46 to close out her 2017 season.

When the team scores were tallied, we edged out State Ranked #24 Tremont by 11 points and lost to #7 ranked Eureka by only 25.  It was our best team race of the 2017 season, so far.

In the guys race, only Soren Halvorsen managed a PR.  That being said, we still had one of our best races of the year.  Noah Smith ran away with the individual conference championship, winning with a 16:10.  Bo Halvorsen held off a charging Kyle Johnson to take second in 16:17.  Mason Ringger finally managed to break up the DeeMack Five, the first time we had managed to put our #3 ahead of their five anywhere other than our home invitational.  Mason just missed breaking 17:00 on the 2.95 course with his 17:01.  Mason earned All-Conference with his 8th place finish.  Nathan DeMarb was one place away from All-Conference honors with his 11th place 17:12.  Matt Ingalsbe was in the top ten at the mile mark, but faded back to 17:26 for 19th place at the finish.  Our top five averaged 16:49, and beat out #12-ranked Tremont and #13-ranked Eureka, whom we will have to continue to out-run if we want to earn another trip to State.  We were only 4-seconds per person behind #6-ranked DeeMack, and if we can get our Four Horsemen (Mason, Nathan, Matt, and Will) up with DeeMack's #4 or #5 we may be able to shrink the ten points they beat us by, by a few more.  Zac Nelson had a good race, running as our #6 with his 18:15.  Will Bushert was our #7 with his 18:25.  Jeb Uphoff showed great heart, running an 18:37.  Aidan Killian broke 19 with his 18:55, just ahead of Brett Endress and his 19:05.  Soren Halvorsen came through with his lifetime PR of 19:20 right behind Brett, and Kayden Dewispeleare capped off his first XC season with a 20:05.  Randy Kent ran a 20:37.  Aidan Mann, Will Yergler, and Patrick McNamara were all within shouting distance of each other, coming through in times of 22:25, 22:27, and 22:40.  Mitchell Uphoff finished up the Titan effort with his 25:32.

**AMBOY RECAP**
Let's first set the scene...

Two days ago, several athletes came in for a 7am workout consisting of twenty (or sixteen) 400-meter repeats on 60-70 seconds rest.  The temp was in the mid 50s, the tunes were rockin' on the stereo, and the times were fast.

Bo Halvorsen and Noah Smith averaged 75.3, which equates to a 15:04 for three.  Matt Ingalsbe was feeling good, running a 76.8 average (15:21).  Nathan DeMarb averaged 77.7 (15:32) and Mason Ringger averaged 78.9 (15:46).  Will Bushert averaged 81.1 (16:13) while Jordan Shelton and Brett Endress were right on his heels with their 81.6 and 81.9 averages (16:19 and 16:23).  Sebastian Meyer finished out the guys workout with his 83.3 average (16:39).  The girls also crushed the workout as Sophi Allen, Cate Atkins, and Julia Reid took turns leading laps as they averaged 94 seconds per lap, which equates to sub-19 times.  Molly Holt and Tori Witzig got their averages under 100 at 97.7 and 98.9, respectively, both extrapolate to sub-20 times.  Allison Kelly averaged 100.1, which equates to a 20-flat.  Megan Endress was only a fraction of a second behind with her 100.2 average, and Sarah Schug averages 101.6, which equals 20:18 if held for three miles.
Last year when we did the same workout, Bo and Noah averaged 80 and 81, Matt averaged 83.9, Will averaged 86.9, Cate averaged 93.9, Julia averaged 94.8, Sophi averaged 104.5, Allison averaged 104.0, and Sarah averaged 106.2.
We had a great workout.  With proper recovery, fitness will be achieved.

After a day off on Sunday (although my sister's wedding was about perfect), we loaded bright and early this morning for the long bus ride to Shady Oaks Country Club and the Amboy Columbus Day Invitational.

Our Fresh-Soph boys started us off.  Matt Ingalsbe, Mason Ringger, and Nathan DeMarb led the way for the Titans as they finished 4th, 5th, and 6th overall in 13:47, 13:50, and 13:50, respectively.  Sebastian Meyer was next for the Titans in 14:17, and Zac Nelson finished our scorers with his 15:19.  Those five combined to win the Fresh-Soph race as a team over Fieldcrest by a score of 48-57.  Also running in the Fresh-Soph 2.4-mile race was Aidan Killian in 15:39 and Brett Endress in 16:02.  Despite Saturday's workout, Matt was 11 seconds faster than 2016.  Matt, Mason, and Nathan all made the Top Ten Titans for the Amboy 2.4-mile course with their efforts.

In the girls’ varsity race, Sophi, Cate, and Julia led the way through the first mile in 6:36, just a smidge behind our target pace.  Sophi hit the second mile in another 6:36 and Cate dropped to 6:28 for a 13:05.  Both finished in the medals, and both cracked the Top Ten for the course.  Also making the Top Ten Titans at Amboy was our #3 Tori Witzig.  Her 21:22 was 11 seconds ahead of EPG #4 Allison Kelly.  Sarah Schug was our #5 on the day, finishing in 22:27, and Molly Holt was feeling that awesome workout as she pushed tired legs to a 22:57.  The girls placed 8th as a team, with their team average under 21:00 for the third meet in a row.

In the boys’ varsity, Noah was able to dress himself for the race (an improvement over 2016's mishap) and him and Bo raced to a pair of sub-16 efforts on the 2.9-mile course.  Bo finishing 11th in 15:56 and Noah in 12th in 15:58.  Will Bushert was our #3 in 18:04, Jeb Uphoff our #4 in 18:26, and the freshman duo of Soren Halvorsen and Kayden Dewispeleare finished our varsity boys’ effort with their 19:58 and 20:49, respectively.

With thirteen runners in the two-mile Open, the Titans had more work to do on the course.  Randy Kent led the way for the open boys, getting out in 6:45 (if the mile mark is right [which it is not]) followed close by Aidan Mann.  Hannah Ludy led our girls, and was able to finish 6th overall in the open, earning our 8th medal of the day.

Since the 2.0 and the 2.4 races do not count for season PRs we knew that both season and lifetime PRs were going to be hard to come by, but no one expected that we would only salvage one PR on the day.  That PR belonged to Cate Atkins for her 19:36 season PR.  While it was a tough day, and finishes may not have been what we were hoping for, we got a good hill workout in, and can now start the recovery process for our HOI Conference meet at Eureka on Saturday.  It looks like rain tonight and tomorrow, followed by warm, but not hot temps throughout the week.  While we could be disappointed with the results, remember that **only through hard efforts can great gains be made**- with a little proper recovery we will come back stronger than ever.  Speaking of stronger than ever...

Congratulations to our JH XC Program as both the boys and girls teams have advance to the IESA State Championship!

**ELMWOOD RECAP**
This year, Elmwood offered a fresh-soph Girls race simultaneously with the fresh-soph boys race at 9:30.  Since it was homecoming and this race was 45 minutes earlier than the varsity girls’ race, we let all the fresh-soph girls run fresh-soph (except Haley, who was working with Lauren in the varsity).  Most other teams entered all their girls in the varsity race to compete as a team, so it was mostly just us and Princeville in the FS girls.  And it was a good race.  Princeville's Sorin took first overall in the race, but Julia Reid had a season PR of 4:43, down to 20:43, within a minute of her 2016 time on this course and placed 2nd overall to lead the Titans FS effort.  Allison Kelly also returned to 2016 form as she dropped a 33-second season PR en route to a third place overall finish.  Tori Witzig outkicked Princeville's #2, breaking 22:00 and setting a lifetime PR of 21:55 in the process, making her the 9th fastest girl in EPGXC history on the Elmwood course. Princeville's #3 and #4 were the next two in the chute, followed by our #4 Molly Holt in a lifetime PR of 22:30, smiling the whole way.  This put the team scores at 19 for Princeville and 17 for EPG through four runners.  Our #5 would have to finish ahead of, or right behind Princeville's #5 for us to have a chance at the team victory.  Hannah Ludy rose to the challenge, she stepped up with a 23-second season-PR running 23:20 and finishing 9th overall, securing the FS Team championship for EPG!  Nice job, ladies, be sure to sign your plaque on Monday.  Also in the FS race were Mya Gramm, just missing a medal by placing 11th.  Amelia Miller dropped a huge PR, running 24:38, her lifetime best time by 1:36!  Two of the gutsiest races of the day belong to Tia Reilly and Olivia Tipler.  As a team, we have been struggling to get everyone to finish the race on their feet- so we set a team goal of having all girls finish the race.  Despite the obstacles they faced, both Tia and Olivia refused to let their teammates down and determined to finish their races.  With those tough attitudes look for those to be back crushing their time goals soon.

Also crushing time goals were the boys in the fresh-soph race.  Matt Ingalsbe led things off and blistered that first mile to take a commanding lead in 5:17.  Unfortunately that may have been a bit too fast as miles two and three still had yet to be ran.  Matt made a valiant effort to hold on to that pace and managed to finish in 7th place and a 17:46- he would be our #3 in the race.  Running #1 and #2 were Nathan DeMarb and Mason Ringger.  The freshmen duo also went out fast, in 5:24, and faded hard to a 6:00 second mile, but both came charging back in mile three with a 5:43 for DeMarb and a 5:51 for Ringger en route to 17:07 and 17:15 lifetime PRs; good enough to place 2nd and 4th overall.  Sebastian Meyer was the #4 for our FS team, running 18:19, a grass PR.  Brett Endress made himself a candidate for snazziest runner of the meet, dropping an 80-second season PR and a 43-second lifetime PR with his 18:30!  He was our number 5 scorer in 21st place, but Elmwood FS boys put the hurt on us pretty good, as they finished 1-3-6-8-9 to dominate the FS boys’ race.  Our #6 in the FS boys was Zac Nelson, running a season-PR 18:47.  Aidan Killian took his old lifetime PR down with a 19:08!  Kayden Dewispeleare and Soren Halvorsen continue to make progress as a pair, both dipping under 20 for the first time ever: Kayden's 19:48 is a 59-second lifetime PR, Soren's 19:54 is a 62-second lifetime PR. Randy Kent took 24-seconds off his season PR, down to 20:55.  Patrick McNamara was a mere six seconds off his lifetime PR, and Mitchell Uphoff had his fastest time of the season by three minutes with his 24:31.

In the girls Varsity, Sophi Allen would be toeing the line with a sub-20 goal for the third time, and as they say, third time's the charm.  She looked wise and strong, moving up considerably over the second mile as she easily got under 20 with her 19:47, good enough for 17th place overall and another medal to add to her collection.  Running second was Cate Atkins, who took two minutes off her previous season best, to run a confidence-building 20:23 and snatch a 24th-place medal in the process.  Sarah Schug was our varsity #3, also running a season PR, her time being 22:37.  Megan Endress and Carmen SantAmour were our 4-5, running 23:10 and 23:41, respectively.  Our girls finished in 10th, although half of our team ran the FS.  Haley Uphoff ran up with the varsity so that she and Lauren Buggar could team up to take down the Dirty Thirty barrier.  They came through the one-mile mark way ahead of schedule at 8:47, but fell behind pace in mile two- Haley logging a 10:07 second mile while Lauren slipped to 11:31.  Knowing that their goals were still within reach, both girls stepped on the gas in mile three.  Haley succeeded in breaking thirty, closing in a 9:38 for a 28:32 lifetime PR.  Lauren brought her pace back under 10 for mile three, but that second mile was just a little too far off as she finished at 30:21.

With only four boys left for the varsity race, we would be one short of being able to score as a team.  Noah Smith was going for a conservative, but on-pace race, shooting for a 16:15 and not having to dip into reserves to make it happen.  After a 5:07 first mile, he was in the top five and looking relatively relaxed.  He held position during mile two, and maintained in mile three, finishing in 5th overall with a better-than-goal 16:04 behind Sectional foes Jackson Stewart (St.T), Cooper Hoffman (Elmwood), Leland Sumer (Tremont), and Trevor Dunkel (Elmwood).  Noah is now the second fastest Titan ever to run the course, behind only school record holder Hunter Cobbley.  Next through the chute for EPG was Will Bushert, dropping a big season PR of 17:17, twenty seconds faster than his 2016 time.  Jeb Uphoff set his fourth lifetime PR of the season by dropping an 18:38, his first time breaking 19 and doing so by twenty-two seconds!  Will Yergler also set a lifetime PR, breaking 23:00 with his 22:50.

The girls earned thirteen PRs out of 16 runners, five of those being lifetime PRs.

The guys earned twelve PRs out of 16 runners, eight of those being lifetime PRs.

**EPGXC Invite Recap- Bringing the Heat!**
It was a warm and sunny day at Furrow Farm as the dust rolled with every team bus and spectator's vehicle that rumbled up the drive.  A small crowd of an estimated 700 people came to the farm to watch close to 500 athletes give their all on the creeks and hills of The Beast.

Starting the races off were the varsity girls: Toeing the line were three girls who have struggling with health issues, all three performed above and beyond expectations.  Cate Atkins ran her second race of the season, finishing in 16th place in 22:24- more importantly, she finished pain free with two thumbs up.  Julia Reid finished her first race of the year, smiling and ready to push the pace a little more next time out.  Tia Reilly made it her goal to get to the two-mile mark after doing 1.5 at Princeville and she made it to the two with a smile on her face, perhaps we'll try three on Saturday.  Leading the way again for the Titans was Sophi Allen, who crushed a 21:43 for 10th place- and cracking the top ten times for this course in EPG history.  Allison Kelly repeated as our #3, running 23:42.  Tori Witzig and Sarah Schug finished out our scorers, running 24:10 and 24:12.  Making our average a 23:13, our second-fastest team on this course in History.  Molly Holt chased in our 4-5 with her 24:27.  Megan Endress, Carmen SantAmour, and Mya Gramm packed it up and came through in 26:35, 26:43 and 26:43, respectively.  Amelia Miller laced up for the varsity race and performed admirably, finishing in 28:44.  The girls placed 4th as a team, their highest finish in an invitational all season and things are pointing in the right direction as we head into October and Big Meet Season.

In the guys varsity race, Bo and Noah worked together to chase down the super-talented Jackson Stewart of St. Teresa at the 3/4 mile mark.  Jackson proceeded to drop the hammer and win the race by 20 seconds, but Noah and Bo refused to give up and hung on for 2nd and 5th overall with their times of 16:53 and 17:11.  Noah's time makes him the 3rd fastest EPGXC runner for the course and Bo's time places him 5th, taking Collin Buchanan and Pierce Furrow off the Top Ten Titan Board for Furrow Farm.  Our 3-4-5 formed a nice mini-pack as Mason Ringger (19th in 18:34), Matt Ingalsbe (22nd in 18:52) and Nathan DeMarb (23rd in 18:53) gave EPG an 18:04 average, our 3rd fastest average as a boys team.  Their places also added up to the team championship, as their 62 underscored a short-handed DeeMack team by 44 points.  We had the fastest #1, #2, #4 and #5 on the day, and DeeMack's #3 only got our #3 by 15 seconds.  Our #6 was Will Bushert in 19:37.  #7 Sebastian Meyer finished in 19:49, and Jeb Uphoff chased Seb in with his 20:02.

In the girls open, Haley Uphoff was our lone female entrant, running 35:41.  In the guys open, Jordan Shelton made up a 15-second deficit on the 5th place guy to steal the fifth and final spot for t-shirt awards. His 19:41 would have been right on Will's heels in the varsity race.  Brett Endress was our #2 in the open, running 21:02.  Zac Nelson was the open #3 with his 21:20.  Aidan Killian ran a 22:08 for #4 in the open.  Soren Halvorsen ran 22:26 and Kayden Dewispeleare continues to put up impressive performances, even on tough courses, with his 22:38.  Randy Kent ran a 22:56.  Will Yergler finished in 25:43, Patrick McNamara in 26:25, and Mitchell Uphoff in 28:43.  All around, the Titans were tough on their home course.  And while some teams may have taken it easy, we ran hard and put in a great workout, attacking the hills and creeks and placing higher as teams than we have all season.

**​PRINCEVILLE**
We went, we ran, we ate pizza.  Highlights of the day included Cate Atkins returning to competition as she emerges from a long dark tunnel of injury recovery.  This meet will be moved to the following Tuesday next year, and there are talks of it becoming a flighted meet, and perhaps moving to Jubilee State Park, which would be interesting.

**BUREAU VALLEY**
A large class A meet with a tough Fresh-Soph competition.  We won last year by only a few points over tough Eureka, Seneca and Elmwood teams.  This year, Fieldcrest, DeeMack, Eureka, and Elmwood all had good teams, we would have to run a bunch of PRs to keep our Fresh-Soph domination streak alive.  The race started with two Eureka runners running to the front in 2nd and 3rd place.  Our freshman tandem of Mason Ringger and Nathan DeMarb were side by side, and sophomore Matt Ingalsbe was right with them.  They were in the large chase pack, but moving up.  Those three also came through the two-mile mark together and all three raced into the finish under 15:00 minutes, all cracking the top ten placing 5th, 8th, and 10th.  Jordan Shelton and Sebastian Meyer were our 4-5 in the FS race with times of 15:37 and 15:41, good enough for trophies by placing 22nd and 24th.  Those five combined for a team score of 56 points, four fewer points than our winning total in 2016, but sadly three points behind winning Fresh-Soph team Elmwood.  Our streak of winning FS races had come to an end.  Other fresh-soph runners for EPG were Zac Nelson (29th, 15:51), Brett Endress (38th, 16:16), Aidan Killian (53rd, 17:13), Kayden Dewispeleare (59th, 17:49), Soren Halvorsen (64th, 18:03), Aidan Mann (75th, 18:48), Randy Kent (82nd, 19:15), Patrick McNamara (94th, 20:59), and Mitchell Uphoff (97th, 22:08).  The fourteen boys we put on the line were the most by any of the 40+ schools at the meet.

In the varsity girls’ race, Sophi Allen crushed it, earning 14th overall with her 20:42, AND earning snazziest runner of the meet.  Allison Kelly was our #2 with a 22:52; Molly Holt moved up nicely, running 23:42; Tori Witzig was our #4 in 24:13; Sarah Schug our #5 ran 24:39; Carmen SantAmour ran a 24:41, and Megan Endress was right behind her in 24:53.  Knocking on the door of our top seven was Mya Gramm, running 25:00, and Hannah Ludy finished 25:32 before crushing her solo in the musical later that night.  The girls placed 11th of 27 schools, unable to repeat our trophy-earning 4th place from 2016.

We managed to put five guys on the line for the varsity race and they performed well enough to place 9th of 18 teams.  Leading the way were Bo Halvorsen and Noah Smith.  Bo ran a 16:40 for 6th place, and Noah joined him in the top ten with his 9th place 16:50.  Will Bushert ran a 19:05; Jeb Uphoff made huge gains over his 2016 time, running 20:40 (down from 21:56), and Will Yergler was our #5 man with his 23:49.

**SJO**
We woke before dawn to take the long bus ride to St. Joseph, Illinois.  We arrived early, claimed the camp with the two picnic tables and prepared for one of the fastest road races of the season.  Boys start this race off at 9:00 and girls chase them around town leaving at 9:05.  It's a pretty crazy race with some of the best teams in the state in attendance.  Our guys were lead (again) by Bo and Noah and they blistered the first mile in 5:07, that hot pace caught up with them in mile two as Noah slipped to 5:18 and Bo to 5:25, Noah was able to hang with that pace a little longer and finished with a 5:20, bringing his total time down to 15:45, his first time breaking 16:00 and earning him a coveted seat in the front row by finishing 8th.  Bo closed in a 5:31, finishing with a 16:03, good enough for 12th, and the second-fastest #2 behind the powerful senior duo Dixon-Helmuth from Monticello.  Our freshmen tandem of Mason and Nathan had to run without their sophomore Matt Ingalsbe who was sidelined by sickness.  They got out quite aggressively in 5:31, and faded hard that second mile to 6:00 and 6:01, but Nate came charging back that third mile with a 5:39, setting a lifetime PR of 17:11 because of that finish.  Mason was right behind, closing in 5:52 for a 17:23, only three seconds off his lifetime PR despite the heat.  Will Bushert had a good race, dropping over a minute from Bureau Valley, down to 17:43, 37 seconds faster than his time here last year.  Sebastian Meyer earned Snazziest runner by setting a lifetime PR by over 30 seconds, breaking 18:00 with his 17:52!  Jeb Uphoff got the chance to race due to Matt's illness, but found it tough to race after his 20x400 workout the night before.  Even during warmup he was getting side stitches, and no wonder considering how tough he was on the track just 16 hours earlier.  I really didn't expect a PR from Jeb, but he had earned that spot on the line at St. Joe due to his huge summer and extraordinary work ethic, so he got his bib and raced.  Somehow, despite his workout, despite his side stitches, despite becoming light headed and needing to stop and brace himself right before coming on to the track with 300 meters to go, Jeb managed to pull off a lifetime PR, and just missed breaking 19:00 with his 19:01.  When the team scores were tallied (two hours later) we placed right where we did last year, 7th, although with nine less points (212 in 2016 to 203 in 2017) and eight seconds faster on average (16:57 in 2016 to 16:49 in 2017).  Sectional rivals DeeMack and Monticello placed 3rd and 1st with 140 and 112 points, respectively.  The boys earned four lifetime PRs (Noah, Nate Seb, and Jeb) and one season PR (Will) out of seven guys on a hot and humid morning.

In the girls’ race, Sophi Allen led for the Titans again and continued to dominate 2017 with her 20:12.  Only two seconds off her lifetime PR.  Tori Witzig stepped up as our #2 for the first time this year with her 22:06, a lifetime PR.  Allison Kelly dropped 20 seconds from her Bureau Valley effort, down to 22:32.  Sarah Schug was our #4 with her 22:46 and Megan Endress set a season PR and ALMOST beat her 2015 lifetime of 22:52, by running 22:53.  Molly Holt earned the last medal for her 100th place finish, until they added a girl that they missed in results, bumping Molly to 101st.  A cruel joke at the end of a two-hour wait for awards.  Carmen SantAmour missed a medal by four (or five) places with her lifetime PR of 23:20- watch for her to sneak under 23 soon.
The girls placed 12th as a team with 321 points.  Several teams from our Sectional placed ahead of us (Monticello, St. Teresa, Tremont, DeeMack), but we have started to drop some serious time and it won't be long before we have four or five girls knocking at the 20:00 threshold, and judging by our track workout on Friday, I'd say we have a lot of speed waiting to manifest itself in our races.  Watch out for falling times ahead.

**DWIGHT RECAP**
In the Fresh Soph girls race we put four girls in the top ten:
Allison Kelly in 4th, Tori Witzig in 7th, Molly Holt in 9th, and Mya Gramm in 10th.  Combined with Hannah Ludy they placed second as a team in the FS Race.
In the Fresh Soph boys race, we placed three in the top ten:
Mason Ringger won the whole race by 21 seconds, Matt Ingalsbe was 5th, and Nathan DeMarb was 6th.  Combined with Sebastian Meyer and Jordan Shelton they won the FS Race as a team (continuing their undefeated streak of FS Team Wins from 2016).
In the Varsity boys race we picked up two more medals: Bo Halvorsen in 4th and Noah Smith in 5th.
We had a few season PRs in the race and Mason Ringger took home the snazziest runner award for his near-PR win in the FS Boys race.

**FTTF RECAP**
We had a good day.
The girls started things off, led by Junior Sophi Allen's 60-second drop, the team averaged 11-seconds faster per person over last week.  Allen's time of 20:10 tied her performance from the State meet in 2016 and tied her lifetime PR.  Running #2 for the Titans was Tori Witzig, 24-seconds faster than last week with her 22:18.  Right on her heels was Allison Kelly, returning to form with a 45-second drop from last week and a 22:20- exactly one second faster than her 2016 time at the same meet.  Our #4 was Carmen SantAmour, who continued her hot streak with another lifetime PR, this one by another 30-seconds, down to 23:30.  Megan Endress finished our scorers with a 23:32, closing in on her lifetime PR.  Mya Gramm came within one second of her lifetime PR, running 23:37.  Hannah Ludy dropped 42 seconds from last week's time, running 23:43.  Our entire top seven girls had PRs: Hannah, Mya, Megan, and Allison with season PRs, Carmen, Tori, and Sophi with lifetime PRs.

The guys continued the good day.

Bo and Noah worked together near the front coming through in 5:07 and continuing to finishes of 15:49 and 16:05, respectively.  Behind the efforts of those two EPG had the fastest 1-2 punch of all 68 class A teams at the meet.  Mason, Nathan, and Matt repeated as our 3-5.  All running faster than last week: Mason with a 17:20, Nathan at 17:23, and Matt at 17:33 (down from 17:48, 17:51, and 17:54 last week).  Closing the gap on our top five and dropping almost a minute from last week was Will Bushert at 17:49.  Freshman Sebastian Meyer repeated as our #7 with an 18:35.  #8 was Jeb Uphoff, who set another lifetime PR, down to 19:04.  Zac Nelson finished in 19:07 down from a 19:32 last week, Jordan Shelton fought through knee pain to repeat his 19:22 from last week.  Brett Endress returned to competition this week, running 19:50- 42-seconds faster than his time here last year.  Aidan Killian ran 20:22 and Kayden Dewispeleare made his cross country debut in 20:47.  Soren Halvorsen ran even splits again, but just missed last week’s time, running 21:06.  Randy Kent made a big step in the right direction with his 21:19.  Will Yergler toed the line for his first ever HSXC race and ran a respectable 23:15.  Patrick McNamara dropped a few more seconds, taking his PR down to 23:22.

The guys finished 7th as a team, dipping their average under 17 to a 16:50.  Three teams from the Elmwood Sectional placed 1, 2, 3 overall, and Eureka was right behind us, so HOIC and Sectionals are going to be tough battles this year, for sure

**MAXWELL PARK RECAP**
EPGXC has swelled its ranks to 35 members: 19 boys and 16 girls: our largest team in school history.  27 of those 35 toed the line at Maxwell Park on Saturday, September 2nd for the first meet of the 2017 campaign.

It started at 9:20am with the varsity boys.  Since we wanted to see full three-mile times for all our guys and the JV races would only be two-mile events, we entered all 15 of our guys in the varsity race.  For our five freshmen, it would be their first high school competition, against 18-year old young men and guys with far more mileage logged in their careers than our newest team members.  Yet, our freshmen stepped up to the task.  Nathan DeMarb and Mason Ringger stuck to each other’s shoulders and cruised through mile splits of 5:42 and 6:02 en route to times of 17:51 and 17:48.  Mason's 17:48 would rank him as the new #9 on the [Top Titans at Maxwell Park](http://www.epgxc.com/uploads/6/4/3/2/64328739/epgxc_top_times_maxwell_park_2017.pdf) (DeMarb's time missed Ryan Filkins' #10 time by one second).  Sebastian Meyer also made the varsity top seven with his 18:51 Soren Halvorsen made his cross country debut in 20:56, and Patrick McNamara also debuted in the sport with a 23:33.  Joining that talented freshmen class this Saturday at First to the Finish will be Kayden Dewispeleare.  Those six freshmen combined with the eight sophomores make 14 of our 19 guys underclassmen, and our sophomores are making gains from where they started the 2016 season.  Jordan Shelton opened 2016 in 20:39 and 2017 in 19:22.  Zac Nelson ran 19:54 in 2016 and 19:32 in 2017.  Aidan Killian was a 20:40 in 2016 and 20:24 in 2017.  Aidan Mann ran 22:21 in 2016 and 21:51 in 2017, almost a lifetime PR.  Matt Ingalsbe led the sophomore class and was our #5 man at the meet with his 17:54, down from an 18:55 last year.  Our fastest runners of the day came from our junior class of athletes, led by the tandem of Bo Halvorsen and Noah Smith.  Bo ran a 16:17, our second-fastest time ever for the course and only three seconds away from his lifetime PR; Noah ran a 16:24, our #3 fastest-ever time for Maxwell and lifetime PR!  Will Bushert ran #6 for the Titans and finished in 18:43.  Our lone senior in the race, Jeb Uphoff, ran perfect splits of 6.29-6.29-6.29 for a 19:27, two-minutes faster than 2016 and a lifetime PR by thirty seconds!  For that effort, Jeb won our snazzy runner of the meet award.

As a team, the guys placed 4th behind Bloomington, Normal Community, and U-High.  We averaged a 17:14.8, our fastest average ever for this meet, which bodes well for the future of the 2017 campaign.  Our girls were only one place behind, placing 5th, with a team average of 22:33.

Leading the way for the Titans was junior Sophi Allen, who ran a 21:10, 49 seconds faster than her 2016 effort.  Freshman Tori Witzig stepped up as our #2, running 22:42 in her first high school 3-mile race.  On Tori's heels in 22:45 was Sarah Schug, running pretty even splits and finishing over 60-seconds faster than her 2016 time at the same meet.  Our #4 was Allison Kelly, running 23:05, followed closely by Molly Holt in 23:07, an improvement of 1:31 over her 2016 time.  Carmen SantAmour had the girls' race-of-the-day, running 24:00, a lifetime PR and finishing in the varsity top seven as our #6.  Megan Endress returned to our top seven with a 24:05, two minutes and fifty-one seconds faster than 2016!  Mya Gramm also dropped serious time from last year- down from 25:21 a year ago to 24:26 this year.  Hannah Ludy ran a 24:35 to finish #9 for the Titans and Amelia Miller finished her first HSXC race in 26:14 to round out the Titan effort.  Seven of the ten Titan finishers improved their times from 2016 and three ran to lifetime PRs.